



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

U. S. Administration on Aging
Listening Session for the
2011 Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act

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Testimony of

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Good afternoon, Assistant Secretary Greenlee and thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify at this important forum. My name is Sandy Markwood and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). n4a is proud to represent the nation's 629 Area Agencies on Aging and to be a champion in Washington, DC for the 244 Title VI Native American Aging Programs.

The 2011 Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act provides all of us with an opportunity to build upon the vision of the Older American's Act founders, many of whom are no longer with us; to build upon the amazing commitment and work of the professionals and volunteers who were the pioneers who put the vision of an Aging Network into practice; and, now, to build upon and enhance the promise of the Older Americans Act for current as well as future generations—so that all Americans have to opportunity to age successfully, independently and productively in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

n4a applauds your efforts to go out into the field and hear either in these listening sessions or through your online forums what State Units, AAAs, Title VI aging programs, aging providers, aging professionals and, most importantly, older adults would like to see in the 2011 Reauthorization.

Over the course of the past few months, n4a has engaged its members in think tank discussions, Board visioning sessions, and field caucus meetings and will soon launch an online Reauthorization toolkit to encourage community discussion. From the input we receive, n4a will formally develop reauthorization principles this summer. However, based upon the feedback from the field we have received so far, we would like to share with you several ideals for reauthorization that have emerged from our Network.

- **Project 2020** (S. 1257/H.R. 2852). Developed jointly by n4a and the National Association of State Units on Aging, the elements of *Project 2020* need to be incorporated and funding authorized as part of the 2011 Reauthorization. *Project 2020* takes the three tested and proven programs from the Aging Network to scale nationally: single entry point models, evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention activities, and enhanced nursing home diversion programs. (For more info: <http://www.n4a.org/advocacy/campaigns/?fa=project-2020>)
- **Local Flexibility.** Increasing local flexibility in funding is needed in order to provide more customized care for the consumers that AAAs and Title VI aging programs serve (one example might be enhancing the flexibility in home-delivered and congregate meal programs, another might be exploring cost-sharing programs).

- **Strengthen Critical Services.** Strengthen the role of the Act in the delivery of the following critical services: information and assistance; healthy aging/wellness/disease prevention; and home and community-based services and supports.
- **Enhanced Coordination of LTSS.** Strengthen efforts to integrate medical and human services-based long-term services and supports (LTSS), particularly in order to promote the Aging Network's role in health, wellness (both physical and behavioral health) and care management. For example, make the connection between single point of entry systems and coordinated health care initiatives, such as ADRCs and the medical home model or others.
- **Build Capacity of the Aging Network.** Expand the funding base and focus of the Act to continue to enhance the capacity of the Aging Network, with additional focus on workforce development, utilization of technology and application of business models.
- **Broaden Planning Role.** Broaden, strengthen and support the unique role of AAAs and Title VI aging programs in strategic community planning to promote the ability of older adults to live successfully and independently at home and in the community for as long as possible. Through expanded partnership opportunities, promote livable communities for all ages and the integration, coordination and delivery of long-term services and supports.
- **Address Changes in the Aging Population.** Ensure that the Act addresses the assets and needs of a changing, aging population, including but not limited to young elders, 85+, minority elders and caregivers.
- **Enhance Mobility Options.** Expand the Aging Network's role in the coordination of transportation and human service programs and the provision of mobility management services in order to promote the ability of older adults to live successfully and independently at home and in the community for as long as possible through expanded partnerships to promote livable communities for all ages.
- **Make the Housing Connection.** Expand the Aging Network's role in access to housing that meets the needs of older adults and the coordination of long-term services and supports in housing, in order to maximize older adults' quality of life and to promote livable communities for all ages.
- **Partnerships.** Expand the Aging Network's partnership opportunities to better collaborate at the federal, state and local levels with other critical entities/networks, such as CMS, CDC, the Veterans Administration, DOT, HUD and other critical federal agencies.

- **Person-Centered Access to Information.** Reinforce and support the Aging Network's role in person-centered access to information and assistance and public education so that older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers have ready access to information on long-term care planning; are connected to community-based long-term services and supports; and have access to options and benefits counseling and case management.
- **Older Adults in the Workforce.** Strengthen existing workforce programs to meet the current and future employment needs of older adults. This is particularly important in light of recent economic forces, the aging of the population and the ever-growing need for many people to work beyond traditional retirement age.
- **Promoting Elder Rights.** Expand and strengthen efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect and exploitation through Title VII. Elder abuse remains a major and growing problem that demands additional attention and resources.

n4a looks forward to working with you, Assistant Secretary Greenlee, your staff at the Administration on Aging, as well as our colleagues in the Aging Network, to ensure that the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act gets the attention and support it deserves. If we all work together—like we did in 2006—we will get the Act reauthorized with enhancements that will help this nation build on its efforts to value and support all Americans as they age.

Thank you.